



Sources of Strength

Date: 2011 (For resources, this is the publication date. For programs, this is the date posted.)

Information

Type: Program/Practice, Education/Training Program, Program with Evidence of Effectiveness

Organization: Sources of Strength, Inc.

Costs:

See the [archived NREPP listing](#) [1].

Contact

See the [archived NREPP listing](#) [1].

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Sources of Strength

[2] [2]

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Sources of Strength, a universal suicide prevention program, is designed to build protective influences and reduce the likelihood that vulnerable youth will become suicidal. The program trains students as peer leaders and connects them with adult advisors at school and in the community. Advisors support the peer leaders in conducting well-defined messaging activities that aim to change peer group norms influencing coping practices and problem behaviors (e.g., self-harm, drug use, unhealthy sexual practices). The program is strength-based and promotes eight critical protective factors that are linked to overall psychological wellness and reduced suicide risk.

Specifically, program activities aim to reduce the acceptability of suicide as a response to distress, increase the acceptability of seeking help, improve communication between youth and adults, and develop healthy coping attitudes among youth. The program is also designed to positively modify the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the peer leaders themselves.

Students are recruited through staff and student nominations to form a team of peer leaders, who are mentored by 2-5 adult advisors. Certified trainers provide the peer leaders and adult advisors with an initial 4-hour interactive training. Adult advisors facilitate peer leader meetings over 3-4 months to plan, design, and practice individual, classroom, and media messaging activities. The peer leaders have one-on-one conversations within their network of friends; develop posters and public service announcements with local faces and voices; give peer-to-peer presentations; and develop messages to be delivered via video, the Internet, or text messages.

The program is often initiated as a 3- to 6-month project, but it is designed as a multiyear project with ongoing peer messaging and contacts growing over time. Adult advisors receive training and ongoing support.

Sources of Strength curriculum was developed by Mark LoMurray in 1998 and has been used extensively in tribal/rural areas of North Dakota as well as with other diverse populations. The program can be implemented in schools or colleges, as well as in faith, cultural, and community-based settings.



Designation as a "Program with Evidence of Effectiveness"

SPRC designated this intervention as a "program with evidence of effectiveness" based on its inclusion in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

Outcome Reviewed (Overall Quality of Research Rating-scale of 0 to 4)*

1: Attitudes about seeking adult help for distress (3.1)

2: Knowledge of adult help for suicidal youth (3.1)

3: Rejection of codes of silence (3.1)

4: Referrals for distressed peers (3.0)

5: Maladaptive coping attitudes (2.8)

Read more about this [program's ratings](#) [1].

* NREPP changed its review criteria in 2015. This program is a "legacy program," meaning that it was reviewed under the pre-2015 criteria. The evidence for each outcome was reviewed and scored on a scale of 0-4, with 4 indicating the highest quality of evidence and 0 indicating very poor quality of evidence. The overall rating was based on ratings of six criteria: 1) reliability of measures, 2) validity of measures, 3) intervention fidelity, 4) missing data and attrition, 5) potential confounding variables, and 6) appropriateness of analysis. *When considering programs, we recommend (a) assessing whether the specific outcomes achieved by the program are a fit for your needs; and (b) examining the strength of evidence for each outcome.*

Implementation Essentials

- Prior to training the peer team, crisis management protocols found in the *Sources of Strength Start-up Guide* should be fully implemented and local adult advisors should be identified and trained.

2012 NSSP Objectives Addressed:

Objective 3.1: Promote effective programs and practices that increase protection from suicide risk.

Objective 7.1: Provide training on suicide prevention to community groups that have a role in the prevention of suicide and related behaviors.

Links within this resource

[1] <https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/Sources%20of%20Strength%20NREPP%20LEgacy%20Listing.pdf>

[2] <https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/sources-strength>

[3] <mailto:contact@sourcesofstrength.org>

[4] <http://sourcesofstrength.org/>



Suicide Prevention Resource Center

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